

Press Release

HARFORD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of the County Executive



PUBLIC SAFETY

"Ensuring a Safe
Harford"

EDUCATION

"Preparing Now,
Building for the Future"

EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

"Governing Smarter"

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

"Growing and Sustaining
Harford's Prosperity"

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

"Protecting Our
Environment"

QUALITY LIVING

"Safeguarding What is
Important to Harford
County Citizens"

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County Executive David R. Craig Announces Priorities for Remaining Two Years of his Term *Working to build a brighter future for Harford County*

(Bel Air, MD) - - Harford County Executive David R. Craig has announced the top priorities for his Administration during his final two years as county executive. The County Executive's priorities include items which will help improve the quality of life for the citizens and better prepare Harford County for the future.

The two-year program of priorities includes improvements in education, public works, public safety, land use, assistance to community agencies, information technology, and the county workforce.

"As the Administration completes the final two years of our term, there are several major initiatives and projects which we hope to accomplish and bring to fruition by working together with the County Council," County Executive Craig said. "Each of these initiatives, once completed, will have a positive impact on government, business, and the quality of life for the citizens of Harford County," Craig remarked.

With respect to public education, the county executive is proposing school construction projects for Youth's Benefit Elementary, Havre de Grace High School, William Paca/Old Post Road Elementary, and Joppatowne High School. Additionally the county executive is seeking athletic field improvements for Aberdeen High School, as well as Joppatowne High, Fallston High, and Patterson Mill High Schools.

Finally, the county executive will be seeking funding to support capital improvements at Harford Community College, to include the planned Nursing & Allied Health Services Building and the West Campus expansion project.

County Executive Craig is also asking for support for major initiatives within the Department of Public Works. These projects include establishing a Water and Sewer Authority and developing a long-term solution for solid waste management. Related to transportation, County Executive Craig is reaffirming to the state the need for BRAC-related intersection improvements at the junctions of MD Rt. 22 with Paradise Road, Beards Hill Road, and Old Post Road. Finally, the Administration is proposing transit service from MARC train stations to the Aberdeen Proving Ground.

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An important, historic, and significant enhancement to public safety is the County Executive's Executive Order to establish a **"Department of Public Safety"** which was initially proposed in the *Harford County Fire and EMS Master Plan*, also known as the *"Fire Study,"* and subsequently recommended by both the Harford County Fire and EMS Commission and the current Harford County Public Safety Commission. The purpose of the proposed department is to help ensure the highest quality of service to the citizens and visitors of Harford County and to support our volunteer-based fire and emergency medical services system. Lastly, the county will construct a new facility for the Emergency Operations Center, the current home of which is obsolete.

With respect to land use, the county must develop a plan to comply with new state mandates. As a result of the recent passage and enactment of Senate Bill 236, known as the "Septic Bill", Harford County will seek to amend subdivision regulations to include the definition of "Major Subdivision" for the purposes of compliance with the new state law. Additionally, Harford County will submit a MDP Tier Designation map as required by the state legislation.

Furthermore, the Department of Planning and Zoning will establish the next two-year milestones for 2013 to 2015 pertaining to the Watershed Implementation Program. The Department of Planning and Zoning will also address development regulations and update zoning and design standards to help ensure quality of life issues are properly addressed. Finally, the county must prepare to begin collecting a stormwater utility fee within the next 18 months as required by legislation passed by the Maryland General Assembly this year.

During the past seven years of the Craig Administration, the county executive has demonstrated strong support and a commitment to various agencies that support the community. Among the priority projects of the Craig Administration for the next two years are the completions of the Southern Resource Center, providing second locations for both the Harford Center and SARC, and providing for the construction of a new Humane Society animal shelter to replace their 50 year old facility.

Enhancing and upgrading the county's information technology capabilities is also considered a high priority during the ensuing two years. For county government operations, the elimination of the outdated mainframe and the adoption of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system will greatly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government. Related to this is the implementation of **EnerGov** software which will assist multiple county agencies with tracking and managing critical government data related to business licensing, land management, permitting processes, and code enforcement issues. Additionally, a new time and attendance platform will be introduced which will migrate the time system off of the mainframe, eliminating the manual leave-slip process.

The final IT enhancement will be the completion of the HMAN (Harford County Metro Area Network) broadband infrastructure. The goal of the Office of Communication and Information Technology is to have the majority of the proposed 100 sites operational by 2014.

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Finally, with respect to the county workforce, the county executive is proposing a comprehensive pay study for all county employees, as well as employees of the Harford County Sheriff's Office. The pay study is to be conducted in FY 2014, with a comparable study be performed for the Board of Education in FY 2015. The pay study is deemed essential for Harford County government to maintain its commitment in keeping its compensation packages competitive.

Pertaining to employee pensions, the county executive is proposing several important changes to the county's pension system to help make it more sustainable for the future and bring its level of funding above the 80% standard. The current pension system must be reformed to meet both the needs of the county's dedicated workforce and the fiscal necessities of budget and management.

"During the course of the past seven years of my Administration, we have worked tirelessly to address a number of significant issues facing our county. Among these were public safety, improvements to education both for Harford County Public Schools and Harford Community College, improving efficiency and economy in government, promoting economic opportunities for our business partners, protecting the environment by strong environmental stewardship, and enhancing the quality of life for the citizens by safeguarding what is important to them," County Executive Craig said.

"I am pleased with the progress we've made, but there is much more to accomplish. We will continue to work in partnership with the County Council, allied agencies, businesses, and community organizations to fulfill these promises and to maintain the high quality of life for our citizens. Our job here is far from over." Craig concluded.

To view the County Executive's full presentation on the two-year initiatives visit the website at:
<http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/Executive/TwoYearProgram.pdf>